

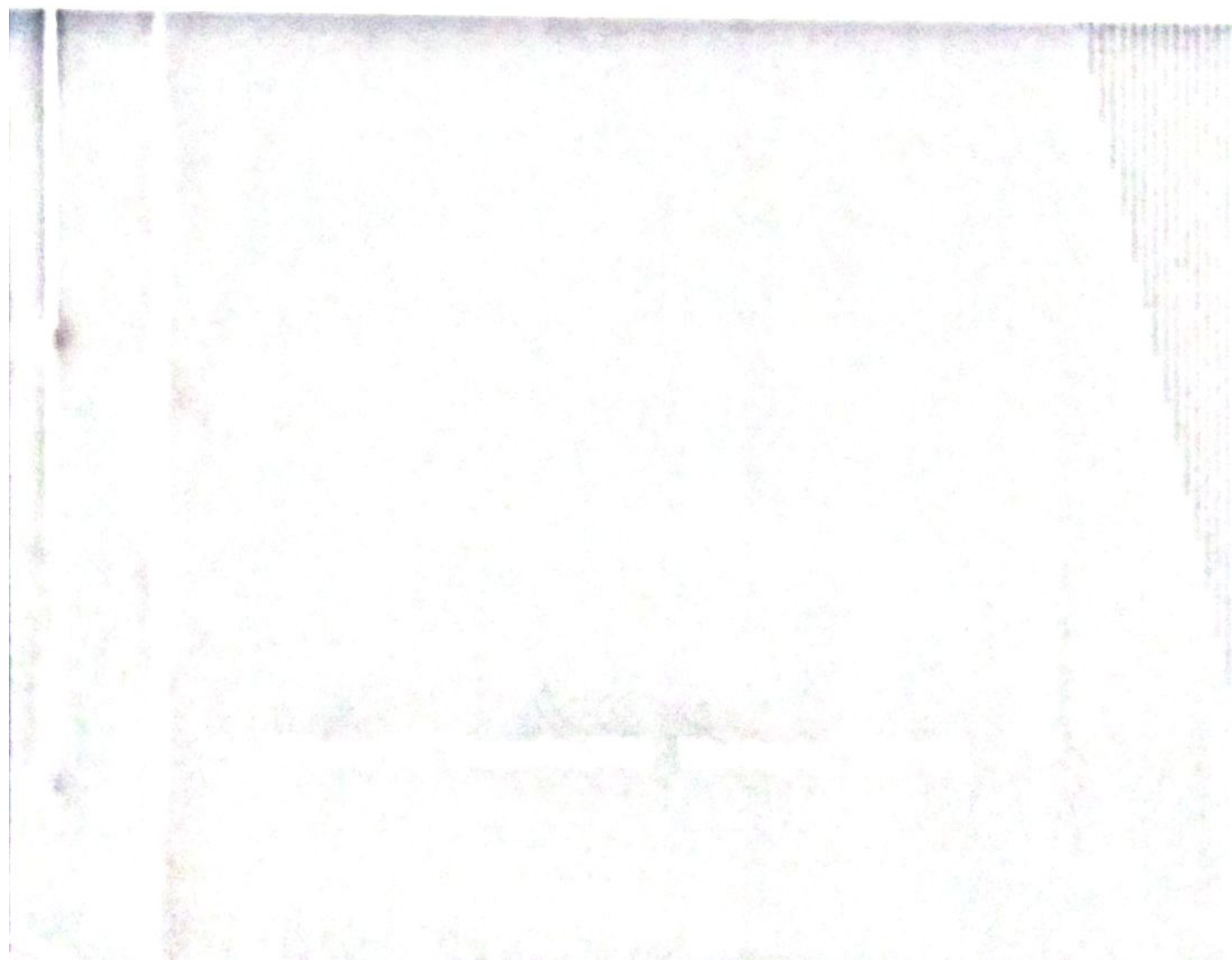
IJWS

ISSN – 2320 - 6403

Indian Journal of Women's Studies

GEM

GENDER, EQUITY & MAINSTREAMING



Indian Journal of Women's Studies

GEM

GENDER EQUITY & MAINSTREAMING

Volume: VII

December 2014

Blood Stone

Issue: 07

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FROM EXCLUSION TO EMPOWERMENT – A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Dr. B. Geetha

Of the world's population, women make nearly fifty percent and yet in every country their social position is inferior to that of men. They work longer hours, have poorer educational opportunities, poorer health care, less control over their lives. Even though woman is the central figure in society, women have been either neglected or denied or excluded their place in their respective society. Women roles in production are not given due recognition. They do not possess the means of production, and, excluded not only economically but also socio-culturally and politically. The development of women was denied for longer period but for overall development of the society women's participation or inclusion is a must in the three major areas "Education, Health and Welfare" (Bhagyalekshmi and Prema Jeyapaul 2001:105).

In this situation emancipation of women and induction of them in the development process at local, national and at the international level becomes inevitable. In international debates concern with processes of social exclusion has too become a cornerstone. Such concerns are often not theoretically developed as it involves more of field based activities. Social exclusion has been defined as processes that socially segment groups and individuals in ways that prevent them from participating in the normative activities of society (Power & Wilson, 2000). Social exclusion is defined differently by different authors.... It most basic application is as a vogue term to refer to deprivation.... in its original French derivation, it refers to social participation, social integration and access to power.... Another meaning of social exclusion is its emphasis on the collective and spatial dimensions of deprivation... social exclusion is related more to the concept of power (or, to be more precise, the lack of power). The most recent definition of social exclusion offered by Eurostat (2010) a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination.

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai



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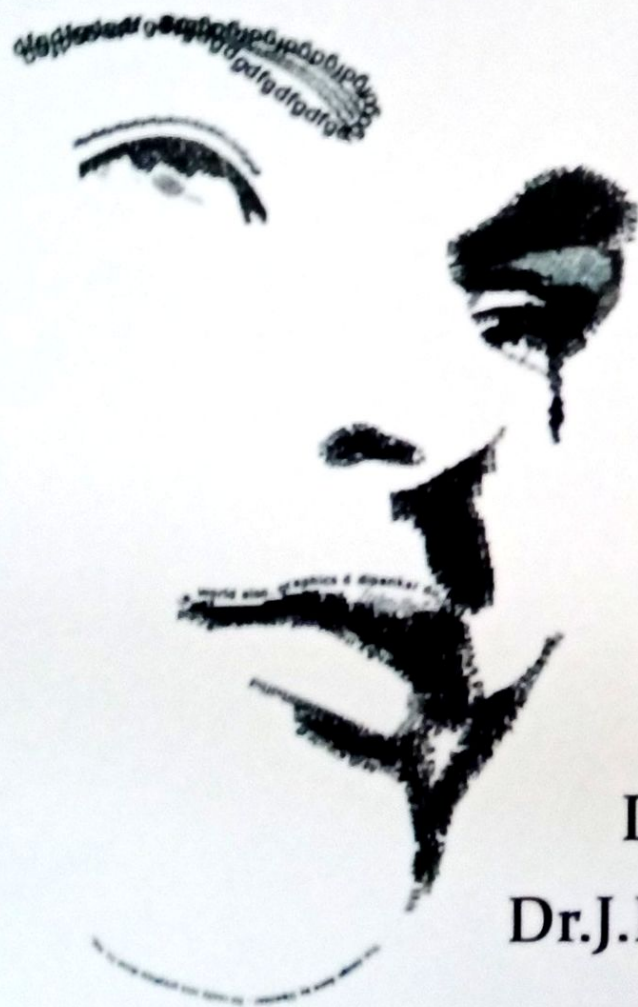
HUMAN RIGHTS

VOLUME 3

ISSUE 1

International Research Journal

ISSN 2320-6942



Editors

Dr. Ratnakar D B

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IMRF Journals

Ratna Prasad Multidisciplinary Research & Educational Society

HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL

BIANNUAL JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH FOUNDATION
FOR RATNAPRASAD MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY (REGD)

B. Chatha

ISSN 2320 - 6942
ISBN 978-93-84124-32-8

Volume 3 Issue 1
2015

Editors
Dr.Ratnakar D B
Dr.J.Helen Ratna Monica



IMRF PUBLICATIONS
RATNA PRASAD MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY [REGD]
ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

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WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG DOCTORAL RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF MADURAI KAMARAJ UNIVERSITY

DR. B. GEETHA

Abstract: Education and empowerment are two concepts that usually go hand-in-hand. Empowerment through education can be continuous holistic process to achieve emancipation. Empowerment does not merely concern with personal identity but brings out a broader analysis of human rights and social justice. Educated women have greater role to play in the emancipation of women and those who are in higher education have wider scope in the society to overcome social constructs of family practices, religious myths, the social and sexual division of labour, marriage customs, internalized beliefs, and expectations that are constraining the women's progress. The present paper is an attempt to analyse the views of the doctoral research scholars of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai relating education for women's empowerment. The study reveals the fact that education and empowerment are correlated to each other and empowerment can be more effective when it is coupled with sensitization, realization of power within, and awareness.

Keywords: Education, Empowerment, Power relations, Women's education.

Education contributes to the development as it improves the quality of life, promotes good health, expands opportunities to employment, and increases productivity in the market and non-market work as well as facilitating social and political participation [1]. Education provides a wide range of opportunities to individuals through exposure to new ideas, new ways of perceiving and visualising the world, advancing self image and increasing decision-making role and capacity at the individual, familial and at the community level. Formal education is usually provided in the society through the schools, colleges and universities. Education is important for everyone, but it is a critical area of empowerment for girls and women. Education is not only an entry point to opportunity but also because the educational achievements of women have positive ripple effects within the family and across generations. Educated women are in the process of empowerment because through education they enhance their knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to fully participate in the development process. Empowerment through education is ideally seen as a continuous holistic process with cognitive, psychological, economic and political dimensions in order to achieve emancipation. Given the complexity of political, societal and international interrelations, one has to systematically think about the strategies and concrete proposals for future action if one hopes to achieve such a goal [2].

The present paper is an attempt to analyse the views of the doctoral research scholars of Madurai Kamaraj University regarding the role of education particularly higher education in the empowerment of women. The study was conducted among 250 scholars who register for their Ph.D. degree as full-time scholar or who remained as the project staff and

perform their research in a regular basis. List was enumerated of the scholars who had registered for Ph.D. programme in the last three years (2011-2014) in various departments and the research institutions.

Table - I Respondent's details

S. No.	No. of scholars		Total
	Male	Female	
Arts	98	123	221
Sciences	111	86	197
Total	209	209	418

As the size of the universe is 418, the data collection was initiated with the idea of census method. When the scholars are approached it was understood that the scholars who are in field and who are in the verge of submitting the thesis were not able in the respective institutions. So they were left away from the study and hence size of the respondent arrived at the end of data collection was 250. The information for the study was collected from the research scholars using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was pre-tested for the validity and reliability. The information in the questionnaire are coded and data are fed in the software - Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The simple and cross percentage tables were generated taking gender as the independent variable.

Presentation of the findings

Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU), (originally known as Madurai University) was named after the historical city of Madurai, was inaugurated on 6th February 1966. The Directorate of Distance Education of the university was established in 1971. In 1978 the name of the university was changed to Madurai Kamaraj University.

HUMAN RIGHTS

International Research Journal

Biannual Peer Reviewed International Journal of
International Multidisciplinary Research Foundation



IMRF Journals

Ratna Prasad Multidisciplinary Research & Educational Society



ISSN

1473-0450
CODEN
SIASDH
Volume 5
Number 2
September 2017



Volume 5
Special Issue 2
September, 2017

UGC Approved Journal Number: 48900

Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities

A Peer - reviewed - Refereed Scholarly Quarterly Journal
with Impact Factor

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

GENDER AND LAW:

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REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF CHILDLESS WOMEN – A CASE STUDY IN MADURAI DISTRICT

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

Dr.B.Geetha

Abstract

Women's right and their struggle for equal status in the society encompasses the understanding of their need for the decision making in every field whether it is relating to their education, career, marriage or procreation. Taking decision in their life and in reproductive role is an asset for the women to achieve the goal of overall rights and empowerment. Reproductive and sexual health were declared as fundamental rights to individuals, couples and families all over the world, by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The ability of women to control their own fertility is an essential criterion to enjoy all other rights and lays down the foundation for the equality between men and women. Reproductive rights include various human rights that have been recognized under different international instruments. India is also a signatory country to the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, and has determined to establish standards in family planning services including the right to reproductive autonomy and collective gender equality. In their 'Program of action' (1994) they called for reproductive health to be reached for all by the year of 2015. The ICPD included in their program of action, that infertility is a basic issue of reproductive health care. Infertility issue was gaining importance in recent years as the number of issues related to childlessness is creeping up. Even then this topic was not given due importance because of sociocultural reasons. The present paper is an attempt to present the views of childless women towards reproductive health, the recent treatment procedures and the technological interventions. The respondents view the latest technology as a boon for their health status because of which they can establish their right in their marital relationship and in the family thereby in the society.

Women's right and their struggle for equal status in the society encompasses the understanding of their need for the decision making in every field whether it is relating to their education, career, marriage or procreation. Taking decision in their life and in reproductive role is an asset for the women to achieve the goal of overall rights and empowerment. Reproductive and sexual health was declared as fundamental rights to individuals, couples and families all over the world, by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The ability of women to control their own fertility is an essential criterion to enjoy all other rights and lays down the foundation for the equality between men and women. Reproductive rights include various human rights that have been recognized under different international instruments. India is also a signatory country to the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, and has determined to establish standards in family planning services including the right to reproductive autonomy and collective gender equality (Sushma Sharma 2015). In their 'Program of action' (1994) they called for reproductive health to be reached for all by the year of 2015. As stated in Paragraph 7.3 of the ICPD Programme of Action:

[R]eproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
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IMPACTFACTOR



SHANLAX INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTS, SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

#61,66 VP Complex, TPK Main Road, Vasanthia Nagar (Adjacent to KVB)

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Office: +91 452 4208765 | Mobile: +91 90 4330 3383

Email: editorsij@shanlaxjournals.in | Web: www.shanlaxjournals.in